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HOUSE RESOLUTION 60
By Williams (Wil)

A RESOLUTION To honor Shirley "Mama" Stokes for her
benevolent and industrious service to the
citizens of the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, It is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those exemplary persons who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Shirley "Mama" Stokes is most assuredly one such extraordinary person who is richly deserving of this body's praise; she is an inspiration to all who are privileged to know her; and

WHEREAS, She founded Mercy Hands Ministries, an organization that every weekend feeds Nashville's homeless; Mercy Hands Ministries also helps individuals who are suffering from addiction and wish to change their lives by entering treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, Mama Stokes was born and raised in Golden Meadow, Louisiana, a small town in the heart of bayou country; one of thirteen children, her parents worked hard to provide their children with the essentials of life; and

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WHEREAS, Shirley Stokes's father worked as a commercial fisherman, while her mother took in laundry as a way to earn extra money for their family; life was seldom easy for the Cajun-French speaking family, but even in the midst of their struggles, Shirley's kind-hearted mother looked beyond the needs of her own family to reach out and help those less fortunate than themselves; and

WHEREAS, Shirley "Mama" Stokes learned during these times of sacrifice that no matter how hard times are, there are always others who are in worse circumstances; throughout her life, Shirley has lent a hand to those in need of help; and

WHEREAS, Her late husband and the father of her four children was a native son of Tennessee; being familiar with this great State and having family and friends already living here, three years ago she moved to Kingston Springs; and

WHEREAS, While in downtown Nashville, Mama Shirley became distressed at the plight of the homeless living on the streets within view of the Capitol Building; deciding not to wait for someone else to ease the suffering, she took action and became part of a powerful solution; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable woman started Mercy Hands Ministries, an organization that serves the homeless of downtown Nashville, offering a "hand-up" not a "hand-out"; purchasing food with her personal money and small donations received from the community, Shirley Stokes prepares meals in her own kitchen and feeds the homeless of Nashville every weekend that weather permits; and

WHEREAS, Seeing the need for more than just food, Shirley "Mama" Stokes also offers those that desire to leave the streets and make a positive and permanent change, an opportunity to attend a rehabilitation program; upon graduation, they live in a structured environment that provides counseling and accountability; and

WHEREAS, She chooses to see the good in people and believes everyone is able to change if they so choose; Mercy Hands Ministries was created to help individuals who want to change their lives for the better; and

WHEREAS, Mama Shirley's Cajun accent indicates the depth of her French roots; her good works on the streets of Nashville is evidence of the depth of her compassion and unconditional love for the downtrodden of our society; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Stokes is a wonderful human being who inspires others with her passion, kindness, and enthusiasm; the epitome of a kind neighbor and citizen, her life of service and goodwill stands as a testament of the difference one person can make; and

WHEREAS, Shirley "Mama" Stokes is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State"; and

WHEREAS, It is the privilege of this General Assembly to honor Mama Stokes for her uncommon devotion and service to the citizens of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby honor Shirley "Mama" Stokes, commend her meritorious service, applaud her steadfast commitment to feeding the hungry, impart our gratitude for her altruistic efforts, and extend to her our heartfelt best wishes for every future success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.